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MEMOIRS

CONCERNING THE

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

OF

THE UNITED STATES

WITH

ENGLAND.

BY CITIZEN TALLEYRAND.

Read at the National Institute, the 15th Germinal, in the Year V.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

AN ESSAY

UPON THE

ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED FROM

NEW COLONIES

IN THE EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Read at the Institute, the 15th Messidor, in the year V.

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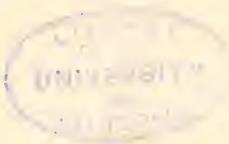

MEMOIR

CONCERNING THE

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

OF

THE UNITED STATES

WITH

ENGLAND,

&c. &c,

THERE is no science more dependent on facts than political economy. Indeed, the art of collecting, arranging, and drawing conclusions from them, constitutes almost the whole of the science And, in this point of view, it has, perhaps, more to expect

from observation than from genius. For, let the moment arrive when our knowledge must be put to the test, at the risk of evincing our ignorance, and the facts, which were before the groundwork of our knowledge, will then become the proof of it.

Yet we must guard against the folly that would in all cases recur to first experiments; and which arrogates to itself the right of being ignorant of every thing, in order that it may take nothing upon credit. Nor should we be less anxious to discard that temerity, which, disdaining every thing positive, finds it convenient rather to guess than to examine.

How must we proceed then? We should

should ever unite the result of our observation to that of our reasoning. Doubtless we should admit the conclusions arising from certain general facts which are constant, which agree well together, and which are viewed in their full extent ; but, at the same time, we ought to know how in the new questions, and even in the more abstruse parts of some old ones, to call in the aid of novel, or recently observed facts. We should guard ourselves against first conclusions, the axioms of idleness and ignorance; and should have the greatest distrust of those generalising principles, which would embrace every thing; or rather, correcting the meaning of a word which has

been so much abused, should give the name of *principle* to that idea only, which is first in the order of our reasoning, and not to the more general idea; to that which precedes, and not to that which results.

Struck with the force of these truths, to which every consideration calls us back, I have undertaken to present to that class of the Institute to which I have the honour to belong, some observations made by me in America, the consequences resulting from which, have more than once struck me with astonishment.

I have persuaded myself that some of these observations, verified through the whole extent of a country, still in its

its early infancy, might be arranged amongst the facts of political economy, and be received there with the same interest which in natural history is granted to the most simple of the productions collected by a traveller.

Unfortunately, the spirit of system is in the sciences what the spirit of party is in common life: it finds cause to abuse facts themselves; for it misrepresents their nature, and perverts their consequences. And this is a further reason, not indeed for disregarding them, but for learning to appreciate well, both what they are, and what they prove.

It is said, proverbially, that facts cannot be disputed. If this proverb should

ever prove true, there will remain very few disputes amongst men.

A remarkable fact in the history of commerical relations, and which it has fallen to my lot to observe nearly, has served to convince me fully to how great a degree we ought to be attentive observers of what *is*, at the time that we occupy ourselves with the consideration of what will be, and of what must be. This fact is the constantly-increasing activity of the commercial relations betwixt the United States and England: an activity, which, on account of its causes and its consequences, has an equal relation to political economy, and to the philosophic history of nations.

When

When, after that bloody struggle, in which the French defended so well the cause of their new allies, the United States of America were free from the dominion of the English, every reason seemed to unite for the dissolution of those commercial connexions which had before existed between two portions of the same people. These reasons were, the remembrance of the oppressions which had been heaped upon the Americans; the still more recent recollection of the evils produced by a seven years war; the humiliation of depending again, for what they stood in need of, upon a country which had wished to subjugate them; and all the titles of military rank still subsisting in every American family, calculated to perpe-

perpetuate defiance and hatred of Great Britain.

If to these, we add that sentiment so natural, which should have induced the Americans to attach themselves, with confidence, to the French, their brethren in arms, and their liberators; and if we observe that this sentiment had forcibly manifested itself, when war was declared between England and France; that, at that period, the discourse of the American people, a great majority of the public papers, the acts of the government itself, seemed to discover a strong inclination towards the French nation, and an equally strong aversion to the English: all these reasons, so powerful when united, would

lead

lead to this result, that the American commerce was for ever turned from its accustomed channel; or that, if it inclined towards the side of England, it would require very trifling efforts to divert it entirely towards ourselves. Hence would result new inductions upon the nature of the relations between a mother country and her colonies; upon the influence of taste and habits; upon the most efficient causes of the prosperity of commerce; upon the direction which it may receive from moral causes, combined with interest; and, in the last analysis, many political errors.

Observation, close observation alone, can prevent these false conclusions.

Whoever

Whoever has well observed America, cannot doubt, that still she remains altogether English in the greater part of her habits; that her ancient commerce with England has increased, rather than declined in activity, since the epoch of the independence of the United States; and that, consequently, that independence, far from being of disadvantage to England, has benefited her in many respects.

This is demonstrated by an undoubted fact. America consumes annually more than three millions sterling of English merchandize. Fifteen years ago, she did not consume half that quantity. Hence, there has been, on the side of England, an increase in the exportation

tion of her manufactured goods, and an exemption from the expence of the American government. This fact, inscribed in the registers of the Custom-House, cannot be disputed; but, as I have already said, there is no fact which may not be abused. If we regarded this as a necessary consequence of every rupture of colonies, even of sugar colonies, with their mother-country, we should be strangely deceived. If, on the other hand, we should be inclined to believe that it depended solely upon transient causes, and that it is easy to obtain a contrary result, we should not be the less in error. To escape both these errors, it is necessary

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to know thoroughly, and to scrutinize accurately, the causes of the fact.

I must, without reserve, affirm, that the inconsiderate conduct of the ancient government of France laid, in a greater degree than is imagined, the foundation of the success of England. If, after the peace which secured the independence of America, France had been sensible of the full advantage of her position, she would have continued, and would have sought to multiply the relations which, during the war, had been so happily established betwixt her and her allies, and which had been broken off with Great Britain: and thus, the ancient habits being almost forgotten, we might at least have contended

tended with some advantage against every thing which had a tendency to recal them. But what did France do at that period? She was fearful that the same principles of independence, which she had protected by her arms in America, should introduce themselves amongst her own people; and, at the conclusion of peace, she discontinued and discouraged all connexion with that country. What did England do? She forgot her resentment; she re-opened speedily her ancient communications, and rendered them still more active. From that moment it was decided that America should serve the interests of England. In fact, what was wanting for that? That she

should wish it, and that she should be able to do it. Now the will and the power were united in this instance.

That which determines the will is inclination and interest. It appears at first strange, and almost paradoxical, to assert that the Americans have a bias from inclination towards England. But we should not forget that the Americans are a dispassionate people; that victory and time have weakened their animosity, and that with them inclination is reduced to simple habit.—Now all their habits assimilate them to the English.

Identity of language is a fundamental relation, on whose influence one cannot too deeply meditate. This identity

identity places between the men of these two countries a common character, which will make them always take to, and recognise each other; they will mutually think themselves at home, when they travel into each other's country; they will have a reciprocal pleasure in the interchange of their thoughts, and in every discussion of their interests. But an insurmountable barrier is raised up between people of a different language, who cannot utter a word without recollecting that they do not belong to the same country; betwixt whom every transmission of thought is an irksome labour, and not an enjoyment; who never come to understand each other thoroughly; and

with whom the result of conversation, after the fatigue of unavailing efforts, is to find themselves mutually ridiculous. In every part of America through which I have travelled, I have not found a single Englishman who did not feel himself to be an American ; not a single Frenchman who did not find himself a stranger.

Nor should one be astonished to find this assimilation towards England, in a country, the distinguishing features of whose form of government, whether in the federal union or in the separate states, are impressed with so strong a resemblance to the great lineaments of the English constitution. Upon what does individual liberty rest at this day

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in America? Upon the same foundations as English liberty; upon the HABEAS CORPUS, and the trial by jury. Assist at the sittings of congress, and at those of the legislatures of the separate states: attend to the discussions in the framing of national laws: whence are taken their quotations, their analogies, their examples? From the English laws; from the customs of Great Britain; from the rules of parliament. Enter into the courts of justice: what authorities do they cite? The statutes, the judgments, the decisions of the English courts.—Doubtless, if such men have not an inclination towards Great Britain, we must renounce all knowledge of the in-

fluence of laws upon man, and deny the modifications which he receives from all that surrounds him. To no purpose do the names of republic and of monarchy appear to place between the two governments distinctions which it is not allowable to confound: it is clear to every man who searches to the bottom of ideas, that in the representative constitution of England there is something republican, as there is something monarchical in the executive power of the Americans. This was especially true, as long as the presidency of General Washington continued; for the force of opinion attached to his person throughout the whole of America, readily represents that kind of

magical

magical power which political writers attribute to monarchies.

That portion of the American nation in which we expect to meet with the fewest prejudices, the men who unite ease with instruction, those who were the movers of the revolution, and who, in instilling into the minds of the people a hatred of the English, ought, one should think, ever to have felt it themselves; these very men have insensibly been drawn back towards England by different motives. Many of them were educated in Europe; and at that period England alone was the Europe of the Americans. They have no comparative ideas of greatness, of power, of elevation, but such as are furnished

them by objects drawn from England; and, surprised themselves by the boldness of the step which they took in separating from that country, they are unconsciously brought back to it by an involuntary feeling of respect. They cannot dissemble, that without France they should never have succeeded in shaking off the yoke of England; but, unfortunately, they think that the good offices of nations are the result of calculation only, and not of attachment; they even say that the ancient government of France, at the very time that it made sacrifices in their favour, did more for their independence, than for their liberty; that, after having assisted them in separating from England,

England, it intrigued to keep them disunited amongst themselves, in order that they might become emancipated, without having either wisdom to conduct, or power to protect themselves.

Thus inclination, or, if you please, habit, incessantly attracts the Americans towards England: interest does so still more; for the first and most important consideration in a new country is, without doubt, to increase its riches. The proof of such a general disposition manifests itself every where in America: we find evidence of it in every part of their conduct. The customs, with regard to religion, are themselves strongly tinctured with it. I will mention the result of what I have observed

in this respect; its connexion with my subject cannot fail to be perceived.

We know that, in England, religion has preserved a powerful influence over the mind; that even the most independent philosophy has not there dared to divest itself of religious ideas; that, from the time of Luther, all sects have found their way thither; that all have maintained themselves, and that many have there taken their rise. We know the share which they have had in the great political changes; in short, that all have been transplanted into America, and that some of the states owe their origin to them.

It appears, at first, as if these sects would, after their transmigration, pre-

serve

serve their original state, and it is natural to conclude that they might likewise agitate America. But how great is the surprise of the traveller, when he sees them all co-exist in that perfect calm which, as it would seem, can never be ruffled; when, in the very same house, the father, the mother, the children, each follows peaceably, and without opposition, that mode of worship which he prefers! I have been more than once a witness of this spectacle, which nothing that I had ever seen in Europe could have prepared me to expect. On the days consecrated to religion, all the individuals of the same family set out together; each went to the minister of his own sect;

and

and they afterwards returned home, to employ themselves in common in their domestic concerns. This diversity of opinion did not produce any in their feelings, or in their other habits: there were no disputes, not even a question on the subject. Religion there seems to be an individual secret, which no one thinks that he has a right to doubt or to investigate. Thus, when there arrives in America, from any country of Europe, an ambitious sectary, eager to afford a triumph to his doctrine, by inflaming the minds of men, far from finding, as in other places, persons disposed to enlist under his banner, he is scarcely even perceived by his neighbours; his enthusiasm is neither attractive

tractive nor interesting; he inspires neither hatred nor curiosity: in short, every one perseveres stedfastly in his own religious opinions, and uninterruptedly prosecutes his temporal concerns.*

This apathy, which cannot be roused by the most furious spirit of proselytism, and which it is our present business to point out, not to account for, certainly takes its immediate rise from the

* In a time of political factions this would cease to be the case; for then every sect would necessarily wish to be an auxiliary of such or such a party, as we have already seen: but when these factions were once calmed, religion would immediately become in the United States what it is at this day; which is as much as to say, that it has there no fanaticism as a constituent part of its composition; and that is an important thing.

(Note of Citizen Talleyrand. in the month of Ventose, year 7.)

the perfect toleration of the different sects of religion. In America no form of worship is proscribed, no one established by law; and, therefore, there are no disturbances about religion.—But this perfect toleration has itself a principle; which is, that religion, although it is there every where a real sentiment, is more especially a sentiment of habit: all the ardour of the moment is employed about the means of speedily improving worldly prosperity; and hence results the chief cause of the entire calm of the Americans, respecting every thing which is not, according to this constitution of their minds, either a medium or an obstacle.

We may remark further, that those

Americans

Americans of the cities, who were not long since colonists, and consequently accustomed to regard themselves as strangers, must naturally have turned their activity towards commercial speculations, and have considered as subordinate to these the labour of agriculture itself, by which, however, they were under the necessity of procuring immediate subsistence. Now such a preference, which supposes, in the first instance, an impatient desire of amassing a fortune, would not fail to increase that desire: for commerce, which extends the relations of man to man, necessarily multiplies his wants; and agriculture, by confining him in the bosom

som of his family, has an equal tendency to reduce them.

America, whose population at present amounts to four millions, and is rapidly increasing, is but in her infancy with regard to manufactures: a few iron works, several glass-houses, some tan-yards, a considerable number of trifling and imperfect manufactories of kerseymere, a coarse kind of knitting, and in some places of cotton, serve rather to point out the feeble efforts that have been hitherto made, than to furnish the country with manufactured articles of daily consumption. It results from this that she is under the necessity of importing from Europe not only a great part of what she consumes

sumes internally, but likewise a considerable portion of what she makes use of for her external commerce. Now all these articles are furnished to America so completely by England, that there is reason to doubt whether, in the time of the most severe prohibition, England enjoyed more exclusively this advantage, with what were then her colonies, than she does at present with the independent United States.

The causes of this voluntary monopoly are, moreover, easy to be assigned. The immense quantity of manufactured goods which are sent out of England; the division of labour, at the same time a cause and consequence of their immense production,

and

and particularly the ingenious employment of the mechanical powers, adapted to the different processes of the manufactures, have enabled the English manufacturers to lower the price of all the articles of daily use, below the rate at which other nations have hitherto been able to afford them. Further, the great capitals of the English merchants enable them to give more credit than those of any other nation; this credit is at least for a year, often for a longer time. The consequence is, that the American merchant who receives his wares from England, employs scarcely any principal of his own in this commerce; but trades almost entirely upon English capitals.

Therefore,

Therefore, it is in fact England that engrosses the commerce of American consumption.

Without doubt the English merchant must, in one way or other, indemnify himself for the interest of the sums of which he allows so long a use: but as the orders succeed regularly, and are increasing every year, there is established a balance of regular paymentsand of fresh credit, which leaves nothing in arrear but the first accommodation, the interest of which is to be gained from the succeeding orders, as well as from the former ones. This first debt establishes, as we see, a connexion between the English and American correspondent, which is dif-

ficult to be broken off. The former fears that, if he fail to send the goods ordered, he may overwhelm a debtor whose prosperity is the only security for his advances; the American, on his part, is afraid of quitting a creditor, with whom he has too many old accounts to settle. It is almost impossible for any third nation to interfere with these reciprocal interests, strengthened by long habit. Thus France, in her commerce with America, is reduced to the supplying of a few products peculiar to her soil; and does not enter into any competition with England in the sale of manufactured goods, which she would not supply to America

rica either at so cheap a rate, or on such long credit.

If it should be objected that, during our revolution, numberless exportations of French merchandise were made to America: the answer is easy. Such exportations have nothing in common with a regular commerce: they were the hasty speculations of those who, frightened by the requisitions, by the *maximum*, and by all the disasters of the revolution, preferred any loss whatever upon their merchandise sold in America, to the risk, or rather to the certainty, of a greater loss, if they let them remain in France. It was the tumultuous eagerness of people who run away from their house when on fire, and to

whom every shelter is good; and not the judicious exportation of merchants, who have made a calculation which they realize. Further, these wares were sold ill; and the Americans considered the English goods as far preferable: which supplies us with a further argument in favour of England's maintaining her monopoly of American commerce.

Thus the American merchant is united to England not only by the nature of his transactions, by the want of the trust which he there obtains, and by the pressure of the credit which he has already indulged in; but still more by that necessity which the taste of the consumer irresistibly imposes upon him. This union is so real, and there

results

results from it such constant commercial relations between the two countries, that America has no true exchange but with England: so that almost all the bills which the Americans draw upon the continent are payable in London.

Let us take care, however, in thus considering the Americans in a single point of view, not to judge of them individually with two much severity. As individuals, we may find amongst them the seeds of every social quality: but as a people newly constituted, and formed of different elements, their national character is not yet decided. Doubtless they remain English from ancient habit; but perhaps also be-

cause they have not yet had time to become completely Americans. It has been observed that their climate is not yet formed: their character is still less so.

If we consider those populous cities filled with English, Germans, Irish, and Dutch, as well as with their indigenous inhabitants; those remote towns, so distant from one another; those vast uncultivated tracts of soil, traversed rather than inhabited by men who belong to no country; what common bond can we conceive in the midst of so many incongruities? It is a novel sight to the traveller, who, setting out from a principal city, where society is in perfection, passes in succession through

through all the degrees of civilization and industry, which he finds constantly growing weaker and weaker, until in a few days he arrives at a mis-shapen and rude cabin, formed of the trunks of trees lately cut down. Such a journey is a sort of practical and living analysis of the origin of people and states: we set out from the most compounded mixture, to arrive at the most simple ingredients: at the end of every day we lose sight of some of those inventions which our wants, as they have increased, have rendered necessary; and it appears as if we travelled backwards in the history of the progress of the human mind. If such a sight lays a strong hold upon the imagination; if

we please ourselves by finding in the succession of space what appears to belong only to the succession of time, we must make up our minds to behold but few social connexions, and no common character, amongst men who appear so little to belong to the same association.

In many districts the sea and the woods have formed fishermen, and wood-cutters. Now such men, properly speaking, have no country; and their social morality is reduced within a very small compass. It has long ago been said that man is the disciple of that which surrounds him; and it is true. Hence he whose bounds are circumscribed by nothing but deserts,

cannot receive lessons with regard to the social comforts of life. The idea of the need which men have one of another does not exist in him; and it is merely by decomposing the trade which he exercises, that one can find out the principles of his affections, and the sum of his morality.

The American wood-cutter does not interest himself in any thing; every sensible idea is remote from him.—Those branches so agreeably disposed by nature; beautiful foliage; the bright colour which enlivens one part of the wood; the darker green which gives a melancholy shade to another: these things are nothing to him; he pays them no attention: the number of strokes

strokes of his ax required to fell a tree fills all his thoughts. He never planted; he knows not the pleasures of it. A tree of his own planting would be good for nothing, in his estimation; for it would never, during his life, be large enough to fell. It is by destruction that he lives; he is a destroyer wherever he goes. Thus every place is equally good in his eyes: he has no attachment to the spot on which he has spent his labour; for his labour is only fatigue, and is unconnected with any idea of pleasure. In the effects of his toil he has not witnessed those gradual increases of growth, so captivating to the planter; he regards not the destination of his productions; he knows not

not the charm of new attempts: and if, in quitting the abode of many years, he does not by chance forget his ax, he leaves no regret behind him.

The vocation of an American fisherman begets an apathy, almost equal to that of the wood-cutter. His affections, his interest, his life, are on the side of that society to which it is thought that he belongs. But it would be a prejudice to suppose that he is a very useful member of it. For we must not compare these fishermen to those of Europe, and think that the fisheries here are, like them, a nursery for seamen. In America, with the exception of the inhabitants of Nantucket, who fish for whales, fishing is an idle employment.

ployment. Two leagues from the coast, when they have no dread of foul weather, a single mile when the weather is uncertain, is the sum of the courage which they display; and the line is the only instrument with whose use they are practically acquainted. Thus their knowledge is but a trifling trick; and their action, which consists in constantly hanging one arm over the side of the boat, is little short of idleness. They are attached to no place; their only connexion with the land is by means of a wretched house which they inhabit. It is the sea that affords them nourishment: hence a few cod-fish, more or less, determine their country. If the number of these seems to diminish

nish in any particular quarter, they emigrate, in search of another country, where they are more abundant.—When it was remarked, by some political writers, that fishing was a sort of agriculture, the remark was brilliant, but not solid. All the qualities, all the virtues, which are attached to agriculture, are wanting in the man who lives by fishing. Agriculture produces a patriot in the truest acceptation of the word; fishing can alone succeed in forming a cosmopolite.

I have, perhaps, dwelt too long on a sketch of these manners: it may seem foreign to this memoir; and yet it completes the object of it; for I had to prove that it was not merely

by

by reason of their origin, of their language, and of their interest, that the Americans so constantly find themselves to be Englishmen—an observation which applies more especially to the inhabitants of the cities. When I cast my eyes upon those people wandering amongst the woods, upon the shores of the sea, and by the banks of the rivers, my general observation was strengthened, with regard to them, by that indolence and want of a native character, which renders this class of Americans more ready to receive and to preserve the impression of a foreign one. Doubtless the latter of these causes will grow weaker, and even disappear altogether, when the constantly-

increas-

increasing population shall, by the cultivation of so many desert lands, have brought the inhabitants nearer together. As for the other causes, they have taken such deep root, that it would, perhaps, require a French establishment in America to counteract their ascendancy with any hopes of success. Undoubtedly such a political project should not be overlooked; but it does not belong to the subject of this memoir.

I have proved that the Americans are English, both in their habits and in their wants: I am far from thence concluding that they have by inclination remained subjects of Great Britain. Every thing, it is true, draws them

them towards England, as an industrious nation; but every thing ought to separate them from England, considered as a mother-country. They may be willing to depend upon her commerce, which they find to their advantage, without consenting to depend upon her authority, under which they have so severely suffered. They have not forgot what their liberty cost them; and they would not be so void of reflection as to consent to lose it, and to allow themselves to be led on by the ambition of individuals. They have no longer, it is true, the enthusiasm which destroys; but they have the good sense which preserves. They do not hate the English government: but this,

this, no doubt, is from the consideration that it can never again become their own. They take especial care not to hate each other: together they fought, together they enjoy the fruits of their victory. Parties, factions, hatreds, have all disappeared:* like

* This was literally true when the present memoir was read to the Institute. If, since that time, parties have been formed afresh; if there is one of them which, to its shame be it spoken, labours to replace America under the yoke of Great Britain; this would confirm but too clearly what I have established in the course of this memoir, viz. that the Americans are still English. But every thing leads me to believe that that party will not triumph; and that the wisdom of the French government has disconcerted its hopes: and I shall not have to retract the good which I have here said of a people, of whom I have a pleasure in recollecting that they are English only by habits which affect not their political independence, and not by a sentiment that

 would

like good calculators they have proved that these produced no benefit. Hence nobody reproaches his neighbour with the existing state of things; each endeavours to turn them to his own advantage: they are mariners arrived in a safe harbour, who think it at least useless to be incessantly asking each other why they embarked, and why they followed a particular course.

In fine, to arrive at a complete proof of the fact which I advanced concerning the relations of the Americans with Great Britain, it was necessary to reject

would cause them to regret the having effected that independence.

(Note of Citizen Talleyrand, in the month of Ventose, year VII.)

ject probabilities, and to discard analogies. Now, in demonstrative sciences especially, it is of consequence, at the risk of great mistakes, to guard oneself against what is merely probable.

The knowledge of this fact itself might lead to false conclusions; it might give reason to believe that the independence of colonies was an advantage to their mother-countries. But when we revert to its real causes, the consequence is reduced within narrower limits. At present we can perceive in it nothing more than that the independence of the United States has been useful to England, and that it would be so to every state of the continent which, on the one side, should

offer the same advantages to colonies of the same nature, and on the other should be seconded by similar faults in its neighbours.

The developement of the causes of this fact has led to many ulterior consequences.

In enumerating these causes, we have found reason to conclude successively:

1st, That the first years which follow peace decide upon the commercial system of states; and that if they neglect to seize the moment to draw their advantage from it, it turns out almost inevitably to their loss:

2dly, That commercial habits are more difficult to break through than

we

we imagine; and that interest brings together in one day, and often for ever, those whom the most ardent passions had armed against each other for a series of years:

3dly, That in the calculations of the relations of every kind which may exist amongst men, identity of language is one of the most binding:

4thly, That religious toleration, in its fullest extent, is one of the most powerful guarantees of social tranquillity: for where liberty of conscience is respected, every other right cannot fail to be so:

5thly, That the spirit of commerce, which renders man tolerant through indifference, tends also to render him

selfish through avidity; and especially that a people whose social character has been shaken by long agitations, ought, by means of wise institutions, to be drawn towards agriculture; for commerce always keeps the passions in a state of effervescence, and agriculture uniformly calms them:

Finally, That, after a revolution which has changed every thing, we should know how to forego our hatreds, if we would not for ever renounce our happiness.

AN

AN ESSAY

ON

THE ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED FROM

NEW COLONIES

IN THE EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES.

THOSE men who have meditated upon the nature of the relations which unite metropolitan countries to their colonies, those who are accustomed at a distance to read political events in their causes, have long been aware that the West India colonies will one day separate themselves from their mother countries; and by a natural tendency,

which the vices of Europeans have but too much accelerated, will either unite amongst themselves, or will attach themselves to the neighbouring continent. For thus it is decreed by that influence of events which determines the destiny of states, and which nothing can resist.

If such events are inevitable, we should at least retard the epoch of them, and turn to our advantage the intervening time.

Disastrous measures have carried devastation into our colonies. Humanity, justice, policy itself, imperiously command, that by firm and wise measures, we at length make an effort to repair the mischief.

But

But in the mean time is it not right to cast our eyes upon other countries, and to prepare in them the establishment of new colonies, whose connexion with ourselves may be more natural, more useful, and more durable? For it inevitably follows that the system of our interior government should introduce into our external relations changes analogous to itself.

The necessary effect of a free constitution is to tend unceasingly to regulate every thing, both within and without itself, for the interest of mankind. The necessary effect of an arbitrary government is to tend unceasingly to regulate every thing, both externally and internally, for the individual

dual interest of those who govern. According to these opposite tendencies, it is incontestible that nothing in common can long exist with regard to the means, as nothing in common can exist with regard to the object.

Tyranny is irritated at expressions of discontent from the very moment that they shew themselves; indifference pays no attention to them; goodness receives them with interest; policy searches for a counterpoise to them: now the counterpoise of discontent is hope.

The ancients had imagined the river of oblivion, in which, at our exit from life, all our recollections were lost. The true Lethe at our exit from the revolution, is in every thing which

opens

opens to men the road of expectation.

" Every change," says Machiavel, " lays the foundation for another." This observation is just and profound.

In fact, without speaking of the hatreds which they perpetuate, and of the motives for vengeance which they leave in our minds, revolutions which have shaken every thing, those especially in which every one has taken part, leave behind them a general restlessness of mind, a necessity for change, an indifinite disposition for hazardous enterprises, and an ambition in the ideas, which tends unceasingly to alter, and to destroy.

This is especially true when the revolution

volution has been made in the name of liberty. "A FREE government" says Montesquieu, "that is, one ALWAYS AGITATED, &c." It being impossible to put a stop to such an agitation, we must regulate it: it must be allowed to exercise itself, not at the expence, but for the promotion of the public happiness.

After the crises of revolutions, there are men worn out and grown old under the impression of misfortune, whose mind must in some sort be made young again. There are some who, no longer wishing to love their country, must be made sensible that fortunately it is impossible to hate it.

Without doubt time and good laws

will

will produce happy changes: but there is need also of establishments contrived with wisdom; for the power of laws is limited, and time destroys alike both what is good and what is bad.

When I was in America, I was struck by observing that after a revolution, very unlike indeed to our own, there remained such slight traces of ancient animosities, so little agitation, so little inquietude; in short, that none of those symptoms were there to be found which every instant threaten the tranquillity of states newly bursting into freedom. I did not fail soon to discover one of the chief causes of it. Without doubt this revolution, like others, has left in the minds of men dispositions

dispositions to excite, or to receive, new troubles: but this need of agitation has been able to satisfy itself differently in a vast and new country, where adventurous projects allure the mind, where immense tracts of uncultivated lands give men a facility of going, to employ a fresh activity, far from the scene of their first dissentions, of placing their hopes in fresh speculations, of throwing themselves at once into the midst of a crowd of new schemes; in short, of amusing themselves by change of place, and thus of extinguishing within their bosoms the revolutionary passions.

Happily the soil which we inhabit does not present the same resources: but

but new colonies, chosen and estalished with discernment, may offer us them; and this motive for occupying ourselves about such, adds great force to those which already solicit the attention of the public, on the subject of this kind of establishment.

The different causes which gave rise to the colonies, in whose origin history has instructed us, were not of more urgent influence: the greater part of them were much less pure. Thus ambition and the ardour of conquest carried the first colonies of the Phenicians*, and of the Egyptians, into Greece; violence that of the Tyrians to Carthage;† the misfortunes of war that

* Cecrops, Cadmus, Danaus. † Dido.

that of the fugitive Trojans to Italy ;* commerce, and the love of riches, those of the Carthaginians to the isles † of the Mediterranean, and upon the coasts of Spain and Africa ; necessity those of the Athenians into Asia Minor, ‡ the people becoming too numerous for their limited and barren territory ; prudence that of the Lacedemonians to Tarentum, who by this means delivered themselves from some turbulent citizens; and urgent policy the numerous colonies of the Romans, § who shewed themselves doubly skilful in giving up to their colonists a portion of the conquered countries, both because

* Æneas. † Syracuse. ‡ Miletium, Ephesus.

§ A great number of small colonies, of which none became celebrated.

because they appeased the people, who incessantly demanded a new division, and because they thus formed, of the discontented themselves, a sure guard in the countries which they had subdued. The ardour for plunder, and the fury of war (much more than excess of population) sent the colonies, or rather the irruptions of the people of the North * into the Roman empire; and a romantic piety, greedy of conquest, those of the Europeans into Asia.†

After the discovery of America we saw the folly, the injustice, and the avaricious spirit of individuals, who, thirsting

* Invasions of Huns, Goths, Vandals, &c.

† Crusades.

thirsting after gold, threw themselves upon the first countries to which their banks conveyed them. The more greedy they were, the more they separated themselves from others: they wished not to cultivate, but to lay waste. Those indeed were not true colonists. Some time afterwards, religious dissentions gave birth to more regular establishments: thus the Puritans took refuge in the North of America; the English Catholics in Maryland: the Quakers in Pensylvania: whence Smith concludes that it was not the wisdom, but rather the vices of the European governments, that peopled the new world.

Other great emigrations are likewise owing

owing to a gloomy policy, or to a policy falsely denominated religious: thus Spain ejected the Moors from her bosom; France the Protestants; almost all governments the Jews: and every where the error which had dictated such deplorable counsels was recognised two late. They had discontented subjects, and they made enemies of them: these might have served their country, but were forced to injure it.

This long experience ought not to be lost to us. The art of putting men into their proper places is, perhaps, the first in the science of government: but that of finding the proper place for the discontented is, assuredly, the

most difficult; and the presenting to their imagination distant objects, perspective views, on which their thoughts and their desires may fix themselves, is, I think, one of the solutions of this difficulty.

In the developement of the motives which have determined the establishment of a great number of the ancient colonies, we easily remark that at the very time that they were indispensable, they were voluntary; that they were presented by the governments as an allurement, not as a punishment. We observe this idea especially to predominate in them, viz. that bodies politic ought to reserve to themselves the means of placing to advantage, at a dis-

tance from their immediate seat, that superabundance of citizens who, from time to time, threaten their tranquillity. Further, this necessity was founded in a vicious origin; it was either an original Agrarian law, giving rise to threatning claims, which it became necessary to calm; or too exclusive a constitution, which being made for one class, caused a dread of too great an increase of population in the others.

It is by making ourselves masters of what was most pure in the views of the ancients, and by guarding against the application which has been made of them by the majority of modern nations, that it will be proper, in my opinion, to occupy ourselves in the first

days of peace with this kind of establishment, which, when well conceived, and well executed, may be the source of the most precious advantages, after so many agitations.

And how many Frenchmen ought to embrace this idea with joy! How many of them are there for whom, were it but for a few moments, a new sky has become an absolute necessity! Those who, bereft of their nearest connexions, have lost by the stroke of the assassin all which rendered their native soil dear to them; those for whom it has become unfruitful; those who find in it nothing but regret, and those who find in it nothing but remorse; the men who cannot resolve upon fixing their

hope

hope in that place where they have experienced their misfortunes; and that multitude of diseased politicians, those inflexible characters, whom no reverse can bend, those ardent imaginations, whom no reasoning can influence, those fascinated spirits, whom no events can disenchant; and those who always find themselves too constrained in their own country; and the greedy and adventurous speculators; and the men who are born to have their names attached to discoveries, to the founding of cities, and to the formation of civilized societies; he for whom France, as now constituted, is still too agitated, and he for whom it is too calm; those in short who cannot put up with

equals, and those likewise who cannot brook any state of dependence.

And let us not suppose that so many different and opposite elements would not unite: Have we not seen, of late years, since there have been political opinions in France, men of all parties embark together, and go to run the same risks upon the uninhabited banks of the Scioto? Are we ignorant of the empire which is exercised over the most irritable minds by time, by space, by a new country, by habits to be begun, by obstacles to be overcome in common, by the desire of injuring, giving place to the necessity of mutually assisting each other, by suffering, which softens the soul, by hope, which com-

comforts it, by the pleasure of discoursing of a country which one has quitted, and even by that of complaining of it?

No, it is not so easy as we think it to hate for ever. This feeling often requires but a specious pretence for its extinction; it never resists so many causes conspiring to destroy it.

Let us then hold it for certain that these discordancies of opinion, as well as those of character, form no obstacle to new colonies; and would all be lost in a community of interests, if we knew how to take advantage of the errors and prejudices which have hitherto opposed the numerous attempts of this kind.

It

It does not enter into the plan of this memoir to present all the details of a colonial establishment: my aim being only to rouse the attention of the public, and to draw towards this subject more profound meditations, and the knowledge of all those who can present us with local information.

Nevertheless, I shall not deny myself the enunciation of some of the most simple principles, upon which these establishments should be founded: I have need to buoy myself up against the dread of witnessing the renewal of disastrous attempts. I think we shall feel the necessity of establishing them in hot countries, for they are the only ones which give a quick re-

turn

turn to those who employ their industry upon them; in places productive of what we stand in need of, and wanting what we possess; for this is the first principle of union betwixt a mother-country and her colonies. We shall occupy ourselves, without doubt, in the formation of vast establishments, in order that men and their schemes may there be at their ease; and they should be varied too, in order that every one may find there the situation and the labour that suits him. We should especially take care not to allow a multitude of men to embark inconsiderately at once, before we have provided for the indispensable necessities of a first establishment; and we shall recollect

that

that it was by the most idle want of foresight that the expeditions to the Mississippi in 1719, and to Cayenne in 1763, swallowed up so many thousands of Frenchmen.

Hitherto governments have formed to themselves a political rule not to send, for the foundation of their colonies, any but individuals without industry, without capital, and without morals. A principle the most opposite possible to this must be adopted: for vice, ignorance, and misery can found nothing; they are calculated only to destroy.

Colonies have often been made use of as a means of punishment, and those which might serve for this purpose have

have been imprudently confounded with those whose commercial relations ought to be the source of riches to the mother-country. We must carefully separate these two kinds of establishments; let them have nothing common in their origin, as they have nothing similar in their destination; for the impression which results from a polluted origin has effects which many generations are scarcely sufficient to efface.

But what will be the bonds of connexion between the new colonies and France? History offers striking results to decide this question. The Greek colonies were independent; they prospered in the highest degree. Those of Rome were always governed; their

progress

progress was scarcely any thing, and their names are hardly known to us. The solution rests upon the same point to this day, in spite of the difference of times and interests. I am aware that it is difficult to convince governments, which know not how to quit their accustomed plans, that they will derive the benefit of their advances and protection without having recourse to co-ercive laws: but it is certain that the interest of the two countries, well understood, is the true bond which should unite them; and this bond is very strong, when there is also a common origin; it is even preserved when the force of arms has deranged the connexion. This may be easily perceived

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in Louisiana, which remains French, although it has been under the dominion of the Spaniards for more than thirty years; and in Canada, although in the power of the English for the the same length of time: the colonists of these two countries were Frenchmen; they are so still, and an obvious bias inclines them always towards us. It is then from a previous knowledge of reciprocal interests, strengthened by the powerful tie of a common origin, that the establishment ought to be formed, and on the strength of this interest that we must reckon for the advantages to be drawn from it. At a great distance every other relation becomes in time illusory; or it is more

expensive

expensive than productive. Hence there should be no domination; no monopoly; always the force which protects, never that which oppresses; justice, kind offices: these are the true calculations for states, as well as for individuals; these are the source of reciprocal prosperity. In short, experience and reason unite in rejection of those pusillanimous doctrines which suppose a LOSS wherever there has been made a GAIN. The true principles of commerce are the opposite of these prejudices; they promise to all people mutual advantages, and they invite them to enrich themselves all together by the exchange of their productions, by liberal and amicable com-

communications, and by the useful arts of peace.

Further, the countries proper to receive our colonies are in very great number; many would fulfil our views exactly.

Upon the supposition that our West-India islands should be exhausted, or that they should throw off our subjection, some establishments along the coast of Africa, or rather in the islands which border upon it, would be easy and convenient. An author deserving regard on account of the views which manifest themselves in his works, and which are always inspired by a love of the public good, I mean Citizen Montlinot, in a very excellent memoir which

he has just published, points out along this coast an Archipelago of isles, of which many, although fertile, are uninhabited, and at our disposal.

M. le Duc de Choiseul, one of the men of our age with most of futurity in mind, who so early as the year 1769 foresaw the separation of America from England, and feared the partition of Poland, was endeavouring by means of negotiations at that time to pave the way for the cession of Egypt to France, in order that he might be ready to replace, by the same productions, and by a more extended commerce, the West-India colonies, at the time that they should be lost to us.

It

It is with a similar view that the English government encourages so successfully the cultivation of sugar at Bengal; that it had, before the war begun, an establishment at Sierra Leona; and that it was preparing one at Boulam. There is a further truth which we should not endeavour to conceal. The question, so injudiciously agitated, respecting the liberty of the negroes, whatever may be the remedy which wisdom may bring for the evils which have been the result of it, will introduce sooner or later a new system in the cultivation of the colonial products. It is politic to be before-hand with these great changes: and the first idea which offers itself to the mind,

that which brings with it the greatest number of favourable suppositions, appears to be, to attempt this cultivation in those very places where the cultivator is born.

I have barely pointed out some positions; there are others which I could also enumerate: but here especially to announce too much of what one means to do, is the way not to do it at all.—Besides, it belongs to the men who have travelled the most, and to the best purpose; to those who have carried into their researches an enlightened and unwearied love of their country; it is to our Bougainville, who had the glory to discover what it has been still glorious for the illustrious navigators of England

land to tracé after him; it is to Fleurieu, who has so perfectly observed all that he has seen, and so well elucidated, by his learned criticism, the observations of others: it belongs to such men to tell the government, when they are interrogated by it, what are the places where a new country, a salubrious climate, a fruitful soil, and the relations pointed out by nature, invite our industry, and promise us rich advantages, for that day at least, when we shall have the good sense to carry there our knowledge and our labour only.

From all that has been here advanced, it follows, that every consideration urges us to occupy ourselves with new colonies: the example of the most

wise

wise people, who have made them one of the greatest means of their tranquillity; the necessity of preparing for the replacing of our present colonies, in order that we may not be found behind-hand with events; the convenience of placing the cultivation of our colonial products nearer to their true cultivators; the necessity of forming with the colonies the most natural relations, more easy, no doubt, in new than in old establishments; the advantage of not allowing ourselves to be outdone by a rival nation, for whom every one of our oversights, every instance of our delay in this respect, is a conquest; the opinion of enlightened men, who have bestowed their attention

tion and their researches upon this object: in short, the pleasure of being able to attach to these enterprises so many restless men who have need of projects, so many unfortunate men who have need of hope.

FINIS.

J. Wright, Printer, St. John's-Square, Clerkenwell.

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